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Pennsylvania State Education Association

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TO: PSEA Officers and
Professional Staff

FROM: Jack R. Corbin
Director
PR&R



RE: NEA: TROJAN HORSE IN AMERICAN EDUCATION
A LECTURE BY SAMUEL L. BLUMENFELD

Attached to this memo is the promotion materials distributed by teachers in a Southwestern region local association. By this method, teachers invite teachers to attend the Blumenfeld "Anti-NEA/Public School Lecture" sponsored by the Western Pennsylvania Committee for Excellence in Education. Through the alertness and concerns of the local association president and George M. Hanes, UniServ representative, I received this material and subsequently attended the lecture in Monroeville on July 16, 1985.

The Blumenfeld lecture was attended by approximately 275 to 300 persons who appeared to be affiliated with a Christian church group or related organization. All adult age groups were evident with the older generation clearly in charge. The meeting opened with a prayer and recitation of the pledge of allegiance to the flag. During the informal periods of the meeting, teachers and former teachers identified themselves to each other. It was not clear if these teachers were private or public school teachers, but it was clear that sympathies were predominantly with the private school movement.

The introduction of the speaker was made by David Cranston, Chairman of the Western Pennsylvania Committee for Excellence in Education. Marjorie Provan was also introduced as a former teacher who is a "fighter for the cause" in the Pittsburgh area. Mr. Cranston's simple remedy for "Excellence in Education" is to "...close down public education and replace it with all the other varieties of private education as the Christian parent's option to the public schools."

With the Cranston introduction as openers, Blumenfeld proceeded with his historical account of the failure of public education and the socialist conspiracy, as masterminded by Progressive Educationists, NEA, and College Professors to guarantee that the public schools would produce nothing more than functional illiterates.

I went into this lecture with some basic knowledge of Mr. Blumenfeld's background and his views regarding public education and NEA. I have enclosed for your information some background as listed below:

1. Why The Schools Went Public - An article by Blumenfeld that appeared in the August 1983 issue of the Conservative Digest which devoted its cover and numerous articles to attack public education.
2. NEA - Trojan Horse In American Education - A review of Blumenfeld's book.
3. Sarael Blumenfeld - An NEA background information sheet.
4. The Paradigm Co. - Publishers of "NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education" (Note suggested grade sheet for the public school system).

One should not underestimate the skillful organization that went into this lecture (one of a series) sponsored and attended by predominantly Christian education organizations, the John Birch Society, and their following. Displays of printed materials, visual aids, films, and tapes were available (for a price) throughout the meeting room. Kits of literature were sold for \$3.00 following Mr. Blumenfeld's lecture so that individuals might carry the speaker's message on public schools to others for action.

Mr. Blumenfeld travels extensively promoting and speaking about his book. His aides work closely with the local John Birch Society chapters and Christian private school groups to assemble his audiences. Interviews on local radio/TV stations often precede the lecture.

During the lecture, I took down quotes from Blumenfeld's comments about NEA which vary from speech-to-speech. I also purchased (\$5.00) a cassette tape of Blumenfeld's speech from his promoters after the lecture. The only variations in the lecture taped and the one I heard are in the references to NEA that seem to reflect current events.

The basic message in Blumenfeld's lecture is summarized in the attached "Exclusive Interview" by John Rees for the Review of the News, January 2, 1985. This publication was sold after the lecture and was available at the John Birch Society display. Three other publications I obtained at the lecture in Monroeville identify two other Pittsburgh area organizations which sponsored the Blumenfeld lecture, which obviously is considered a fundraiser activity for their causes (\$3.00 admission plus books and pamphlet sales).

My notes on Blumenfeld quotes are as follows:

"NEA is really a political organization with its main thrust--political goals. . . education is its pretext. NEA wants to change our society."

"Helen Wise (former NEA President) said teachers individually and collectively can change the direction of government."

- "NEA should be considered the U.S. third political party. . . it (NEA) is far better organized than the Democrats and Republicans."
- "NEA has a grassroots army of political activists called UniServ which moves around the country organizing teachers for political actions."
- "NEA teachers were the largest single delegate group at the National Democratic Convention."
- "NEA has developed strategies against us (Combatting the New Right), and I have a copy of their (NEA) latest training materials." (Speaker held NEA papers high so all could see, then quoted selected items from NEA's "alleged hit list" of New Right organizations.)
 - National Association of Concerned Educators
 - Tax reform groups
 - Western goals
 - Amway Corporation
 - Concerned parent groups

NOTE: Blumenfeld cleverly selected organizations from the NEA list which he knew would offend his audience, which responded in kind and on cue.

- "NEA wants unlimited taxes."
- "Socialists cannot hope to gain control except via one of the existing political parties. . . NEA is the party that has the philosophy of Secular Humanism which holds there are no unalienable rights. . . i.e., if you don't believe in God, then you cannot believe in unalienable rights--only those rights granted by the State."
- "NEA's political agenda is identical to the radical left. . . and the Communists love it. . . NEA has no anti-Russian resolutions."
- "The president elect of the TEA (Texas or Tennessee? Association) in a TV debate had to admit to me he was sending his son to a private school." (Audience applauded loudly.)

Mr. Blumenfeld attributed the incredible increase in teenage suicides (February 6, 1985 Education Week article re Texas high school senior suicide) to teachers in the public schools who don't teach the meaning of life. . . i.e., "to glorify God."

- "NEA wants to lower the compulsory public school age to three years. . . they want to get the kids earlier before they get too many religious values by age six."

The speaker also developed a ridiculous charge that the chosen method of teaching children to read in our public schools (look-say) has created dyslexic children.

"The progressive educators had to lower the literary level of children (dumbing down curriculum) so they had to change the way children learn to read by teaching English as though each letter was a picture without meaning. . . the look-say method using Dick-Jane readers."

"In 1955, Rudolph Flesh in his book Why Johnny Can't Read blew the whistle on the look-say teaching methods. . . phonics works better for teaching reading."

"Professors then formed the International Reading Association to fight Flesh's book."

"In 1960, the AFL-CIO drive for white collar workers focused on teachers."

"By the mid-'70s, NEA was a major political force and elected Jimmy Carter as President. . . who in turn gave the NEA its Federal Department of Education as the payoff."

"Through collective bargaining, the public servant becomes the public's master."

Among his many far-fetched examples of what, why, and how teachers teach were the examples of the alleged Death Education curriculum movement:

"In 1977, a suburban Boston school gave a Death Education course to 5th graders which featured field trips to a local cemetery to visit graves. . . teachers asked students to write out plans for their own funeral. . . one parent said children on a field trip visited a mortuary."

"In a junior high school in Shakopee, Minnesota, a suicide quiz was given to students. . . asking students to choose methods of suicide from a multiple choice."

Blumenfeld paused and asked his audience. . . "What would you think of a person who would give your child such instruction and quiz"? And, he explained, these morbid, sick activities are going on in your public schools by the direction of the secular humanists, NEA and State Education Departments which develop the materials.

Blumenfeld's summation included claims that public schools also:

- "Promote satanic cults."
- "Allow AC-DC rock music to be played, but not religious songs."
- "Have caused the black youth situation."
- "They are grooming the blacks for the killing violence necessary to any revolution. . . so now you see why Goetz shot the homicidal maniacs in the New York City subway."

The speaker's parting message and call for action was:

"Public schools are moral cesspools and you are paying for it. . . and the NEA Secular Humanists (Atheists) are getting away with it, but could not for five minutes if you Christians would withdraw your support (money) and children from the public schools. . . your children are at risk academically, spiritually, and intellectually while they remain in the public schools."

This first-hand account of one of Mr. Blumenfeld's "performances" is for your information as background when discussing his views with our members. Remember, teachers are getting invitations to attend meetings to hear Mr. Blumenfeld or those who share his views on NEA/public education.

The groups which sponsor the Blumenfeld lectures are local citizens gathered together by common interests. Local teachers know and respect many of these people and may share some of their beliefs. However, my professional opinion is that most teachers would be offended by Blumenfeld's "performance" and would no doubt tell him so. My purpose in attending the lecture in Monroeville was to gather the information which I now share with you. Had I lost sight of my goal during the Blumenfeld "performance," he and I might not have left the meeting quite the same as when we entered.

Keep in mind Blumenfeld and his agents adapt their material to the group before them very skillfully. The tape in my office of a previous Blumenfeld lecture was, as he indicates in his opening remarks, at a meeting of the John Birch Society. I am not certain, but I at least felt I was at a Birch Society meeting in Monroeville on July 16, 1985.

Please call me to discuss any further interest in this Clearinghouse for Academic Freedom (CHAF) report or any use or sharing of its contents you might be considering with our membership.

JRC/sf
D/M